

August 2022

THE GROWING EDGE

Harrisburg First Church of the Brethren | 219 Hummel St. Harrisburg, PA 17104



A PRAYER FOR AUGUST

Written by Devin Dixon-Rosario

Gracious and loving God, we thank you once again for the earth you have so graciously created for us. Your sunflowers bloom in shades of yellow that illuminate fields for miles. You are the founder and creator of all things beautiful. May you give us strong roots, shower us in sunshine; give us water where we thirst; keep our leaves green. We give you the glory, the honor, the praise on this day and all days to follow. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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DISCERNING TOGETHER

Summer has been full of life and opportunity. Over the past couple of months we have had people from our congregation attending National Young Adult Conference, Annual Conference, and National Youth Conference. Pastor Josiah led a FaithX trip to Rwanda and we hosted a junior high FaithX group during our VBS week. In many ways, this summer has emphasized connection and relationship building, especially across the denomination. As wonderful as it has been getting to travel and meet new people, I am always happy to return home. And now that many of our busy summer activities have finally settled, Pastor Josiah and I have made more of an effort to intentionally discuss and vision together the future of our faith family. Yet, this discernment process is never easy.

In fact, discerning the will of God is one of the most difficult things to do. How can we as human beings possibly figure out what God is up to? In moments where I feel inadequate in my discernment, I am grateful for scripture that reminds me that discerning the will of God is a group effort. 1 Corinthians 14:29 instructs us to “Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others weigh what is said.” As a church family we continue to discuss and discern the mission of our church and the future of our lives together. And when the discernment process points us into uncertain territory, I think about the Story of Sarah and Abraham.

In Genesis 17: 1–2 it tells us that “When Abram was ninety–nine years old, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said to him, “I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless. And I will make my covenant between me and you, and will make you exceedingly numerous.” God did new and surprising things for Abraham and Sarah even in their old age. First Church has been a congregation here on Hummel St. since 1896. If God is capable and excited to do new things for Abraham and Sarah in their more seasoned years, I can only be filled with hope and anticipation of the beautiful things God has planned for us.



Pastor Lexi

So August is primed to be a month where we can take some time to discern, pray, and plan for what will come in the new fall season. In September, we are planning to start our Adult Bible study back up. There are new potentialities on the horizon for our Spiritual Life Team. And, we look forward to having the first changes to our sanctuary windows finalized in the fall. There is still much to be done in the life of our church but just as we are not done with the work, God is not done with us.

THRIVING TOGETHER

For those who are unaware, we have been taking part in an initiative through Messiah College called Thriving Together: Congregations United for Social Justice. As part of this initiative, we have called a team of Alyssa Parker, Donna Benson and myself to be our representatives for the different enrichment activities that have been apart of the initiative. This past Sunday, our entire service was focused on different things we have been learning as we have taken part in the plethora of enrichment activities. If you were not present, I encourage you to check out the video on our YouTube Channel.

Some of what we have been learning is not new, such as the fact that racism is alive and well today. That it is not only a southern problem. That the Black Church has historically been a place of prophetic work towards racial justice and equity for all people. Donna shared during our 5th Sunday Service about a wonderful Civil Rights Bus Tour in which she was able to take part. Her photos and learnings really highlight all of the ugly things that were a part of life in the Jim Crow South and the resiliency, courage and perseverance that led to some real change in this country. The enduring message is that the work is still necessary as we have not yet arrived at a place where our country can truly be described as a place of "liberty and justice for all."

Some of what we have been learning is very new. Such as a new way of reading the scriptures described as Anti-Racist Spirituality and Anti-Racist Theology. Reading the scriptures, particularly the life of Jesus with new eyes will enable us to have a faith-filled grounding in the word which will help us to endure and persevere in the work that lies ahead. Alyssa did a wonderful job of outlining what these new eyes can help us to see and some of what this new understanding can motivate us to be about.

Some of what we have been learning is motivational. We have been challenged to consider the Race and Place of our own Faith Community. To consider, how did South Allison Hill become the way it is today? How did Harrisburg First Church of the Brethren come into being and why? How have we interacted with our broader community during the days when land was stolen from Black and Brown people in order to build our State Capitol Complex. What about when the same people were displaced again in order to build more state government infrastructure along Forster Street. When our neighborhoods were literally burning due to rioting near the time of MLK, Jr's assassination and the Vietnam War Protests, what part did we play? What did we do in the wake of the opioid epidemic and as Black Lives Matter Protests engulfed our nation? I describe this study of Race and Place here on Hummel Street as motivational because it brings to mind all that God has brought us through already, how we have reacted and how we have interacted. Sometimes we have risen to the occasion and at others we have fallen short. I also describe it as motivational because it is work that is not yet done.

We must continue to research from whence we have come, to learn from our victories as well as our mistakes, to allow this work to propel us into the future that God has in store for this faith community. A day when we, along with all of our neighbors: our brothers, sisters and siblings; from every race, ethnicity, nation, sexual and gender identity, and socio-economic background; who call South Allison Hill home, can truly Thrive Together.



Pastor Josiah

Our Community Ministries

bcmPEACE

"Serving Allison Hill in becoming a safer, healthier community empowered by God's peace."

GET CONNECTED!

- Make sure you are receiving our monthly Newsletter
- Donate your unwanted clothes to Community Aid using our partner number #10018
- Come take a tour of the space and community
- Become a Board Member
- Become a Mentor
- So many more opportunities!

CLOSINGS AND VACATION

Offices will be closed on the following dates:

- Sept. 5 | Labor Day
- Oct. 10 | Indigenous People's Day
- Oct. 10-17 | Vacation
- Nov. 8 | Election Day

ADD IT TO THE CALENDAR

- August 19th – Back to School BINGO Fundraiser
- October 5th – Be The Peace Banquet
- November 6th – Bowl-a-thon

WE NEED YOU!

Are you passionate about the Allison Hill Community and bcmPEACE mission and programs? We would love to invite you to join the bcmPEACE Board of Directors! If you are interested, please contact Alyssa at 717-234-0415 x20 or brethren.com.min@gmail.com!

What's Happening?

Agape Satygraha participants are continuing to go through the program while graduates have been participating in safe spaces led by Devin Dixon-Rosario and mentoring our participants! This past month we had two participants graduate levels! T'Mya Butler is the second young adult to complete the white level via our new fast track program, while Rachel Ludwick completed the blue level and is moving on to brown!



bcmPEACE at Annual Conference was a new venture and one that allowed us to reach a new audience of potential supporters and siblings in Christ. We were seeking to engage in conversation and spread the word about bcmPEACE and that we did! Thank you to staff and board members who helped hold down the table!

bcmPEACE at National Youth Conference was another new venture and one that allowed us to reach a new audience possible volunteers, supporters, and mold young minds to the paths of peace. We were able to converse with 9 youth and adults on what faith in action in our community can look like!



Back to School BINGO Fundraiser

Friday August 19 @ 6pm
Harrisburg First Church Fellowship Hall



\$20/packet
\$5/Blackout Game



See Alyssa Parker or Wanda Santiago to reserve your packet early and get to play an Early Bird game! All monies goes towards bcmPEACE programs and operations!

Make sure you are keeping up with all things bcmPEACE by checking out our website www.bcmpeace.org! Also if you are not already receiving our Monthly newsletter, we would love for you to sign up for our mailing list. Thank you for your continued support as we continue to serve Allison Hill in becoming a safer, healthier, community empowered by God's Peace!



/bcmpeace



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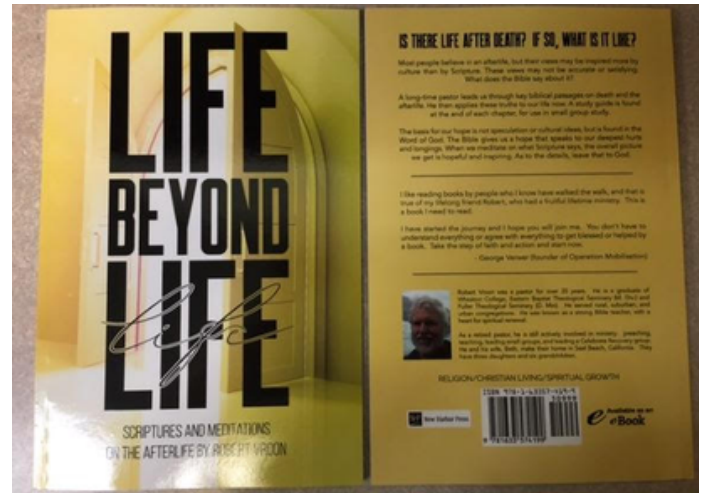


/www.bcmpeace.org

Faith and Justice Corner

LIFE BEYOND LIFE: SCRIPTURES AND MEDITATIONS ON THE AFTERLIFE

**Written by Rev. Bob
Vroom**



Most people believe in an afterlife, but their views may be inspired more by culture than by Scripture. These views may not be accurate or satisfying. What does the Bible say about it? Rev. Bob Vroom, leads us through key biblical passages on death and the afterlife. He then applies these truths to our life now. A study guide is found at the end of each chapter, for use in small group study. The basis for our hope is not speculation or cultural ideas, but is found in the Word of God. The Bible gives us a hope that speaks to our deepest hurts and longings. When we meditate on what Scripture says, the overall picture we get is hopeful and inspiring. As to the details, leave that to God. Copies can be purchased through Amazon.

The Bible makes social justice a requirement of faith and a fundamental expression of Christian discipleship.

Interns from On Earth Peace rally together to speak out about gun violence. In the sharing of experiences and sentiments, we stand together to build a community of peace and love. Our faith calls requires action; faith without work is dead! We must stand together as a community to share God's love and promote peace in our communities. In the last month alone, we have lost 2 members of our community to gun violence. We mourn with the families of our lost siblings with recognizing the call for change.



The Youth Corner



SCHOLARSHIP FUND AVAILABLE FOR THE FALL SEMESTER!

As the fall semester is approaching, we encourage those seeking financial assistance for schooling and educational programs to submit an application for our scholarship fund! We have helped students with educational expenses through institutions such as Temple, HACC, and the Whitaker Center. Funds are available for programs from Pre-K through Higher Eddegrees. If you have questions about the fund or need help applying, contact Donna Benson or the Church office. Applications can be found at <http://www.hbgfirstcob.org/scholarship-fund/>

Youth Group Sunday



The next Youth Group Sunday will be **August 7th**. Mark your calendar for the Youth Group pool party on **August 21st**

CHRISTIAN ED TEAM LEADER NEEDED!

Are you someone who is passionate about teaching and education? Do you enjoy staying organized and planning events? Are you looking for an opportunity to get involved here at First Church? Well the Christian Ed Team is looking for a new team leader for 2023! If you are interested in serving in this way contact Donna Benson or Pastor Lexi for more info.

Back-to-School!!

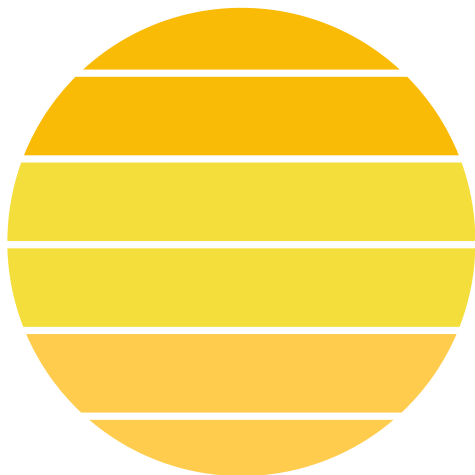
Teachers, Parents, and students, are you ready for the 2022–2023 school year? On Sunday, August 28th, we will be having a Back-to-School blessing for all of our students, teachers, and anyone else who works in the education field. Join us for this time of blessing and prayer as many of our community members start a new school year!



Join Camp Swatara for movie nights in the Campground!

Movies will be played on the FCC Ballfield on the second Saturday of every month! It is recommended that you bring a blanket or chair to sit on. The price of admission is \$2. Please note that times may vary based on weather and other factors, so check the camp Swatara website for important updates!





Morning Meditations

Join Pastor Lexi for a morning meditation every Wednesday at 9 am via Zoom! We will be highlighting different forms of spiritual practices, prayer, and meditation. If you are in need of spiritual grounding, please consider entering this space!

Praise Reports

We praise God for the commissioning of three new deacons into our deacon body. We thank God that Christine Ludwick, Pastor Belita Mitchell, and Ade Senaike have said yes to the call to deacon ministry. We ask that God will continue to strengthen their faith as they serve our church family.

Prayer Requests

We pray for Pauline Mehaffie, that God's comfort be upon her as she is now bedridden. We also ask for God's strength for those who are her caretakers.

We pray for our sister Sophina Atem, as she travels and continues to navigate the difficult immigration system in our country.

We pray for God's protection and guidance for our students, parents, teachers, and all those who work within our education system, as they prepare to start another school year.

Congregational News and Announcements

We appreciate the help we have received from you all with making each Sunday service run smooth and efficient. To sign up for a role this month, please see our signup sheet on the welcome table or confirm via email at hbgfirstcob@yahoo.com

7 ____ Welcome Table ____ Zoom and Video
____ Scripture Reading ____ Announcements
____ Time for Young Disciples

14 ____ Welcome Table ____ Zoom and Video
____ Scripture Reading ____ Announcements
____ Time for Young Disciples

21 ____ Welcome Table ____ Zoom and Video
____ Scripture Reading ____ Announcements
____ Time for Young Disciples

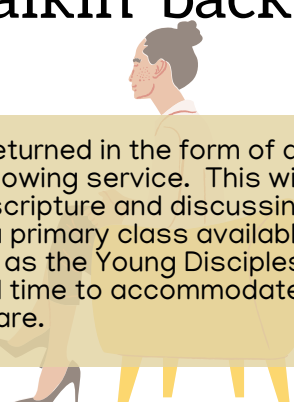
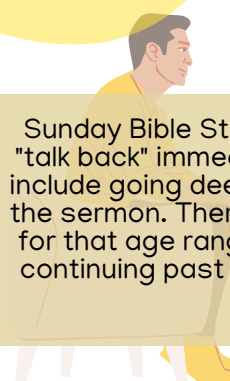
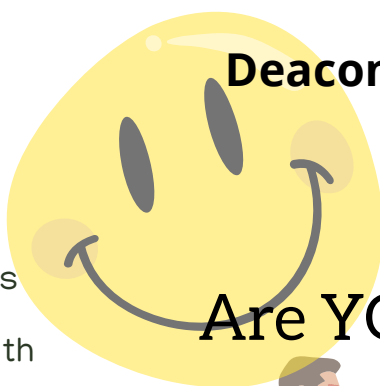
28 ____ Welcome Table ____ Zoom and Video
____ Scripture Reading ____ Announcements
____ Time for Young Disciples

Deacons of the Month.

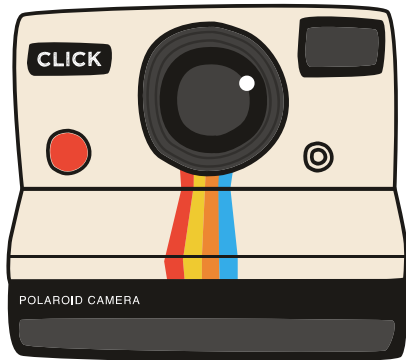
Ade Senaike
Joy Reardon

Are YOU talkin' back?

Sunday Bible Study has returned in the form of a "talk back" immediately following service. This will include going deeper into scripture and discussing the sermon. There will be a primary class available for that age range as well as the Young Disciples continuing past its normal time to accommodate childcare.



More Announcements



On **August 24th & 25th**, between 2:00 pm- 8:30 pm, representatives from Member Church Directories will be at the church to take **FREE** professional photos of all of our members and families. Each session will only take about 10 minutes. You will be given a **FREE** 8 x 10 and have the option to purchase multiple photos from your session.

<https://instant-scheduling.com/sch.php?kn=3534502&typld=64314&step=2>

We are looking to fill 75 slots, so please feel free to share this information with other friends and extended family members. They are welcome to come to take a **FREE** portrait and will be given the choice to opt out of our directory.

The Capital Area Music Association (CAMA) announces its Annual Broadway Summer Concert: CAMA On BROADWAY! This concert will take place on **Thursday, August 18, 2022 @ 7:30pm** at the Gamut Theater located at 15 North 4th Street, Harrisburg PA.



National Youth Conference

Three young adults from our congregation (**Devin Dixon-Rosario, Alyssa Parker & Briel Slocum**) traveled all the way to Fort Collins, Colorado last week to lead workshops for youth and advisors.

Together, Briel & Devin led three Kingian Nonviolence training workshops, where participants were taught teachings and Martin Luther King and how to view/use principles of Kingian Nonviolence to fight for minorities such as the BIPOC and LGBTQ+ community.

Alyssa Parker's workshop, Faith and Space, took a deep look at the intersections of our faith principles with our work in our communities.

In addition to workshops, both Briel and Alyssa led small group sessions where youth were challenged to reflect sermons and get to know one another!

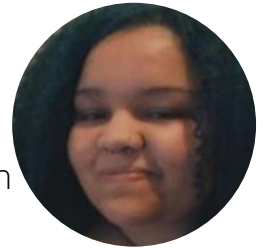


Even More Announcements

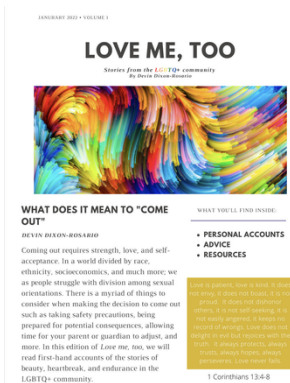
ON EARTH PEACE (OEP)



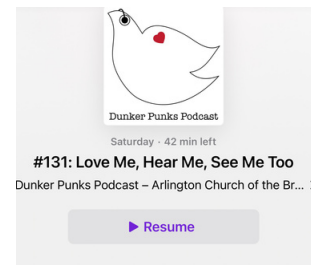
Devin Dixon-Rosario
LGBTQ+ Justice Organizer



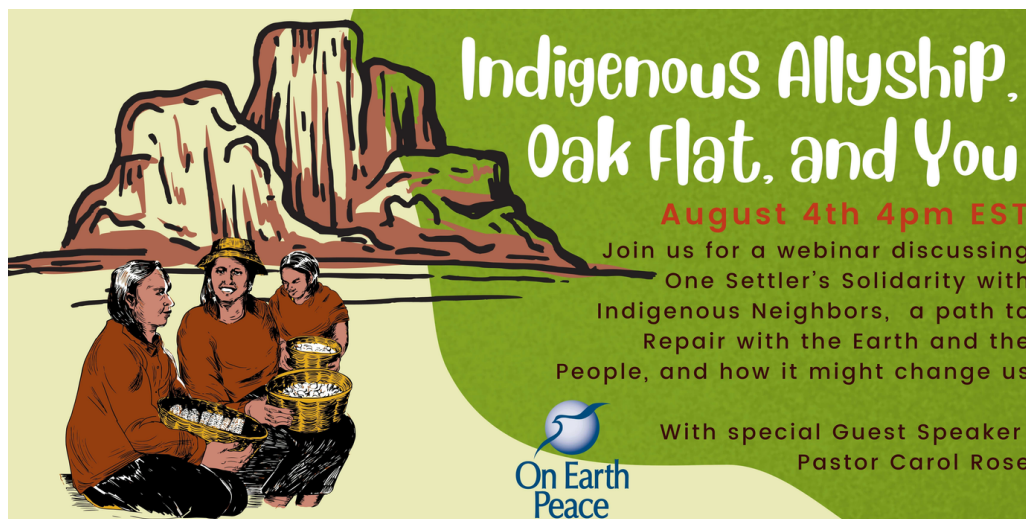
Briel Slocum
Youth & Young Adult Intern



On Earth Peace Gun Violence Campaign



Is your church a safe space for all people? In this episode of the podcast, Briel Slocum, Devin Dixon-Rosario, and Samson Arnold share stories of young people coming out as LGBTQ in their communities and the difficulties, blessings, and hopes therein.



August 24– Indigenous Allyship, Oak Flat, and You

The racial uprisings of the past several years have come with increased awareness about the current and historical mistreatment of Native Americans. This has led some to ask how they can better support their Indigenous Neighbors. At the same time, more and more people are becoming concerned about the health and safety of our planet. Please join us for a webinar and discussion with special guest speaker Pastor Carol Rose, an Arizona resident and a passionate supporter of Indigenous Peoples and the fight to save Oak Flat. We will be exploring topics like One Settlers solidarity with Indigenous Neighbors, a path to repair with both the Earth and the People.

Birthdays & Anniversaries!



Do YOU want to submit something for the Growing Edge?

Please send the material in to the office by August 18th.

Happy
Anniversary

**August 23rd
Drew & Renee Hart**

**August 27th
Robert & Marian Brode**

| | |
|-------------|-----------------------|
| August 2nd | Don-Valliant Mitchell |
| | Devin Dixon-Rosario |
| | Andrew Rodriguez |
| August 5th | Serenity Mitchell |
| August 6th | Donna Benson |
| | Roger Dixon |
| August 8th | Susan Wolfe |
| August 9th | Mary Stillions |
| August 11th | Beth Vroon |
| August 15th | Elizabeth Hayes |
| August 17th | Elizabeth Funk |
| | Ivelisse Class |
| August 18th | Pauline Mehaffie |
| August 21st | Marvin Brummell |
| August 23rd | Rachel McClinton |
| August 24th | Mariana Martinez |
| August 27th | Rick Mehaffie |
| August 28th | Lexi Aligarbes |

AUGUST ANE DISTRICT PRAYER CALENDAR

Pray for this Church

This Church is Praying for Us

| | | |
|-----------|---|---|
| 7 Aug 22 | <u>Wyomissing (Wyomissing, PA)</u> | <u>Germantown (Ph Iladelphia, PA)</u> |
| 14 Aug 22 | <u>Lebanon (Lebanon, PA)</u> | <u>Mohrsville (Mohrsville, PA)</u> |
| 21 Aug 22 | <u>Light Of The Gospel Fellowship New Jersey (Cresskil, NJ)</u> | <u>Stevens Hill Community (Elizabethtown, PA)</u> |
| 28 Aug 22 | <u>Stevens Hill Community (Elizabethtown, PA)</u> | <u>Light Of The Gospel Fellowship New Jersey (Cresskil, NJ)</u> |

AUGUST 2022

| MON | TUE | WED | THU | FRI | SAT | SUN |
|---|--|-----|-------|--|--|---|
| 1 Discernment Team Meeting | 2 Ministries Coordinating Team Meeting @ 5:30pm | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 8 bcmPEACE Board Meeting @ 5:00pm | 9 Stewardship Meeting @ 4:00pm | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 |
| 15 | 16 Special Services Meeting @ 2:00 pm Spiritual Life Team Meeting @ 6:00 pm | 17 | 18 | 19 Back to School BINGO Fundraiser @ 6:00pm | 20 | 21 Children's Church Teacher Meeting @ 12:00pm |
| 22 BRT Meeting @ 4:00pm Iconography Meeting @ 6:00pm Discernment Meeting @ 7:00pm | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 |
| 29 First Day of School for Harrisburg City Schools | 30 | 31 | Notes | | | |
| Staff Meeting @ 12:30pm | Midweek Meditations @9am Computer Class @ 10:30am & 2:30pm Aqaape Satyaagraha @ 5pm | | | | Pastors Day off Wellness Hub @ 10am | Indoor and Zoom Worship at 10am |

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August 2022

The Growing Edge

The monthly newsletter of the Harrisburg First Church of the Brethren

Josiah Ludwick, HFCoB
Co-Pastor

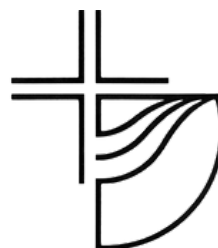
Lexi Aligarbes, HFCoB
Co-Pastor

Alyssa Parker, bcmPEACE
Operations Manager

Devin Dixon-Rosario, HFCoB
Administrative Office Manager

Our Staff

We are called to be a Christ-centered multi-cultural community in the inner city, sharing the love, healing, peace and justice of Christ.



The Growing Edge is a publication of Harrisburg First Church of The Brethren for our members, friends, and neighbors.